

From Andrew Mason, fellow POW from Australia.

On 13 May, 1945, I was in charge of a detail working near Red Cross boxes in the Japanese store. I refused to let the men steal but later one of them gave me a can of salmon, with which I was caught. I was investigated by and American Officers, found guilty of stealing and taken to Japanese HQ with three other members of the detail. The camp Commander immediately punched me in the face and kicked me many times on the shins. He then commenced to 'examine' me. I had to strip off my upper clothing and kneel down. I was then terrifically beaten with a bamboo pole, 1 inch in diameter, with the end shredded. I was beaten until the whole of my back and shoulders were badly lacerated and bleeding.

We were then taken and made to kneel down outside the guardhouse. Small rocks were placed beneath our knees then pieces of timber placed under our shins, so that the weight of our bodies rested on a few sharp jagged points of the rocks. We were only a few feet from the guards and any movement on our part and relax our legs was immediately punished by kicks or punches. We were not allowed to sleep at any time during the four days of our detention. When our eyes closed from sheer fatigue we were immediately kicked into wakefulness.

At 7pm we were lined up and given 6 strokes across the buttocks with a piece of timber two inches x two inches and about four foot long. The guard used all his strength and swung the pole as one would swing a baseball bat. Each stroke left a great purple bruise. The bashing was repeated at 10:00 P.M. and every subsequent day at 7am, 7pm and 10pm. During the night the guards amused themselves by pouring buckets of icy water over us and taking turns to punch or kick us or crack us over the head or back with rifle butts. I was given the terrible task of plucking the mustache of one of the party. I refused and was beaten until I commenced to pluck it out hair by hair

At 10 A. M. the following morning the new guards came on duty. They also took turns to beat us according to their fancy. Every thing was used on us, fists and heavy boots, sticks, heavy poles, straps, heavy leather belts and rifle butts. During the afternoon 'the Sailor', a notorious guard known by everyone in camp for his brutality, went to work on me with a strap, double and doubled again until it resembled a cat o nine tails. I thought he would never stop. I begged for mercy but he kept on and on

All day and night we were kept bitterly cold by having water thrown on us at frequent intervals. The constant kneeling by this time had caused our feet and legs to become swollen to twice their normal size. To add to our discomfort we were tied to a post with our hands behind us for the whole night – still in a kneeling position of course.

The next morning we were forced to do calisthenics, owing to my badly swollen feet and legs I could not perform the exercise to the satisfaction of the guards. This resulted in another bashing by the Sailor. We were again bashed when the new guards came on at 10am and as usual during the day we received our quota of kicks, etc. Late that night one of the guards decided too relieve his boredom by practicing ju-jitsu. He flung over his shoulders about 6 times onto the rough ground, besides subjecting me to several painful holds.

About midnight a guard urinated in our faces. We were given short heavy sticks and made to beat each other over the head. This continual beating was one of the worst features of our torture. On the morning of the 4th day we were given a drink from a trough which was used for cement making. This dirty water was the first substance we had received since being turned into the guardhouse. About 10am I asked permission to speak to the Camp Commander with a view to termination of our punishment. Immediately upon entering the Commandant's room he slapped my face, kicked my shins and told me to kneel down. I was then given all sort of instructions which I promised to obey and we were released after signing a declaration to the fact that we would never again cause the Japanese authorities any trouble whatsoever. During May the weather was cool, with very cold nights and frequent rain. The weather was an important factor, as we were kept outside the whole time. Even during heavy rain we were not permitted to seek shelter. As my back was badly lacerated from the first beating I was allowed to wear my shirt for the first day and night, after that I was stripped to the waist the same as .In my companions. In order to increase our discomfort our boots were also removed.

When we were sent to the guardhouse we were classified as 'Light Duty Sick' but notwithstanding that fact the Japanese sent us to mine with our shift at midday on the day of our release. Owing to the condition of our feet and legs we could hardly walk and we could not perform our work to the satisfaction of the mine Forman we were reported to the guards at the mine who gave us a severe beating, mostly with a pole about 2 inches in diameter. I declare that the above is the truth without any exaggeration whatsoever.

(signed) Frank C. Stecklein
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